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Small-Scale Agriculture Today

Office for Small-Scale Agriculture

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JAN 13 1997

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U.S. Department of Agriculture - Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Agricultural Research For A Better Tomorrow

AT ISSUE... FINAL CHAPTER

A dictionary, now badly worn, has been my faithful USDA office companion for years. The book was opened to page 718-19 as I started to have serious thoughts about writing the AT ISSUE copy for the Winter 1997 issue of *Small-Scale Agriculture Today*. Glancing at the pages, the word "out" came into focus. I read the definition ---"1. away from, or not in, the normal or usual place, position, etc. 2. away from one's home, country, work, etc. 3. in or into the outdoors. 4. to exhaustion, extinction or depletion. 5. to the end or conclusion; to a final decision." I had read enough! Although there were 64 more meanings, those read were certainly applicable to my life and status. Therefore, I will close my dictionary and vacate the USDA Office for Small-Scale Agriculture (OSSA) **January 3, 1997**.

After making the decision, I intently read from my dictionary to learn more about the letters "o-u-t." More than 175 words begin with "out." The first is "outage" (a failure or interruption in use or function) and the last "outworn" (out-of-date, no longer useful or acceptable). In addition, there are about 100 words in our English vocabulary that begin with the prefix "out." Yes, I have read enough and fully absorbed the various meanings of the word "out" so that I can close the book and shut my USDA office door. But first—the final chapter.

Today, people are being inundated with a steady stream of innovations and new technologies. Many of my generation, particularly those having a farm or rural background, have witnessed the transition from horse power to behemoth machine power; from oil lamps to electricity or even solar-powered lighting; from "chicken every Sunday" to every day, everywhere, and at anytime; from crank-handled telephones to cellular phones; from stub pencil and vest pocket notebook to

electronic organizers and fax machines; etc. Certainly, more examples could be listed, but you get the picture!

My USDA employment permitted me to travel extensively and speak out often for the people on small farms. Certainly, people outside of government have been very supportive of OSSA, transcending the farming community to include rural and urban landowners, nonfarm businesses, and concerned citizens who pay taxes and know the importance of a healthy environment, quality and safe foods, and a wholesome family lifestyle. Such people want more than a "bleep on the screen" or a recorded message telling them to . . . "press 1, 2," or some other combination of numbers for the pre-recorded cookbook answer. People want to connect or to be connected. To hear or see you means more than anything!

Personal contact, using communication skills to keep people informed and in touch, was always most important to me. It's called networking. Yes, there is a place for new technology but perhaps not for all people. The same can be said about writing work plans and filling in answers to blanks generated by management. People want one-on-one—not the green bleeping menu of progress! (Howard W. "Bud" Kerr, Jr., USDA-OSSA, Washington, D.C. 20250-2244)

TOPICS AND TECHNOLOGY

This Year - The 1997 All-American selections include "Siam Queen" Thai basil, which has large leaves, thicker stems, and better flavor than other Thai basil, and "Cajun Delight" okra, which produces pods 50-55 days after transplanting.

Newsletter - *Small Acreage Farming* is an 8-page publication available by subscription. For ordering information, contact: Jeff Rast, Center for Small Acreage Farming, P.O. Box 219, Fairfield, ID 83327; fax: 208-764-2332.

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Recalling - "In the past 50 years, our society has migrated from family farms and rural communities. We have become a culture of refugees from the land, and for many the taste of summer tomatoes is all that's left of a living memory." (*National Gardening*, July/August '96, p. 20)

Reunion - A common love of gardening is the ground upon which a father and son build a new relationship. The 208-page book *In My Father's Garden* costs \$21 postpaid. Contact: Loreen Sander, Longstreet Press, 2140 Newmarket Parkway, Suite 18, Marietta, GA 30067, telephone 1-800-027-1488.

Word Farming - If the word "if" is planted, rotated, or cultivated with some words relating to agriculture, new meanings emerge for harvesting. For example:

- If parsley farmer is sued, could they garnish his wages?
- If you stomp grapes, do you get whine?
- If a pig is sold to the pawn shop, is it a hamhock?

Costs \$15 - Uday Bhawalker's booklet *Turning Garbage Into Gold* is an introduction to vermiculture biotechnology. Contact: Stephen White, Worm Digest, Box 544, Eugene, OR 97440-0544; telephone: 541-896-9058. (A video on the same subject is also available for \$28.)

Cold Weather - Freezing will destroy the usefulness of some pesticide products. Freezing may also cause liquid pesticides to break their containers, resulting in leakage.

Vegetarian Cooking - *Life's Simple Pleasures* (\$19.95) presents six complete menus for each of the four seasons and features more than 140 tempting recipes on 162 pages. Contact: Karen Mangum, Harvest Press, 267 Old Saybrook Drive, Boise, ID 83706; telephone: 208-385-7443; fax: 208-385-7166.

Spring Special - Dandelions - Some people eat'em if they can't weed'em! For more information about the Defenders of Dandelions, contact: Dr. Peter Gail, Goosefoot Acres, P.O. Box 18016, Cleveland, OH 44118; telephone: 1-800-697-4858.

Free - The information poster *Conservation in Harmony With the Land* counts 18 ways to healthier land and water on the farm and in our communities. Contact: Rona Flagle, Maryland Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401; telephone: 410-841-5863.

Now Available - The video *Volume II Horse and Mule Progress Days* with Sam Moore of Salem, OH, runs 90 minutes and costs \$33.95. Contact: Gai. Damerow, Rural Heritage, 281 Dean Ridge Lane, Gainesboro, TN 38562-5039; telephone/fax: 615-268-0655.

Tip - Always locate fire extinguishers near exits.

On the Farm - "Your methods of cultivation are a century behind the times," said the officious agricultural expert to the veteran farmer. "I'd be surprised if you get a bushel of oats to the acre out of this field." "So would I," replied the farmer with a grin. "That's barley."

Unusual Notebooks - *Garden Notes Through the Years* (\$10.95) invites you to record your garden events, week by week, permitting a detailed 4 years' notes to be easily read. *The Plant Collectors Notebook* (\$7.95) permits 140 plant entries on structured pages and has a table of contents. Specify the name or names to be imprinted on the cover page and add \$1.25 for handling one book; however, there is no handling charge if two or more books are ordered. Contact: Betty Mackey, B.B. Mackey Books, P.O. Box 475, Wayne, PA 19087-0475; telephone: 610-971-9409.

Hair Sheep - The Katahdin breed of sheep was developed as an answer to the need for a hardy meat sheep that requires no shearing, but can meet the North American industry standards for carcass quality. Contact: Laura Fortmeyer, Katahdin Hair Sheep International (KHSI), P.O. Box 115, Fairview, KS 66425; telephone: 913-467-8041.

Water - The first complete book of farm pond management, *Ponds: Building, Maintaining, Enjoying*, is 95 pages and costs \$14.95. Contact: Carolyn Garrick Stern, Progressive Farmer, Box 830069, Birmingham, AL 35283-0069; telephone: 205-877-6413.

Always - Equip your tractor with emergency marker lights and slow-moving vehicle emblems.

Gene Logsdon - He's a farmer who thinks and a writer who gardens. The end product is a new book for release in May. *The Contrary Farmer in the Garden*, a 242-page publication, can be obtained for \$20.95 from Sandi Eaton, Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 205 Gates-Briggs Bldg., P.O. Box 428, White River Junction, VT 05001; telephone: 1-800-639-4099.

Video - Learn from the comfort of your own home and at your convenience about *Part-Time Farming*. Each 1-hour video costs \$15.95. Contact: Dave Varner, Part-Time Farming, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE 68528-1507; telephone: 402-441-7180.

Reminder - Fresh vegetables and fruits are good for you and should be a part of everyone's daily diet/routine.

Coming - Two new titles to be released in early 1997 are *The Directory of Small Farm Production, Marketing and Sustainable Resources* and *Bamboo as a Cash Crop*. For more information contact: Eric Gibson, New World Publishing, 3085 Sheridan Street, Placerville, CA 95667; telephone: 916-622-2248; E-mail: newworld@innercite.com.

Children's Video - *The Carrot Highway*, a 40-minute production, costs \$17.90 and is packed with information that both children and adults can learn from. Contact: Diane Simon, Whisper Productions Co., 3686 County Road 60, Ada, OH 45810; telephone: 800-631-6236.

Tip - Always replant only large garlic cloves from bulbs that don't have any small cloves or just a few. Over time you should get bulbs that seldom produce "slivers."

Important - When growing common bulb onions, always get long-day cultivars suitable for northern latitudes. It may be tempting to try such short-day cultivars as Granex hybrid (from which Vidalia and Maui onions are grown), but you won't get big mature bulbs, just little bulbs or scallions.

Down Home - A feast of everyday cooking and holiday favorites, *Granny's Drawers: Four Generations of Family Favorites*, features more than 340 recipes and southern nostalgia. The cost is \$16.95. To obtain a copy, contact: Karen Harris, Carolina Publishing; P.O. Box 2505, Chapel Hill, NC 27515; telephone: 919-851-9715; fax: 919-851-0455.

Alert - A October 1996, news release from the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) reported "Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE), a viral disease spread by mosquito bites, caused the deaths of five emus in Wicomico County on Maryland's Eastern Shore." For more information, contact: Dr. Roger Olson, MDA, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401; telephone: 410-841-5810.

Big - A new world record for a pumpkin—1,061 pounds—was established in October 1996. For more information and a seed catalogue (send a self-addressed and stamped envelope) contact: Ray Waterman, World Pumpkin Confederation, 14050 Rt. 62, Collins, NY 14034; telephone: 716-532-5995.

Tax Topics - To get tax help telephone the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) information number, 1-800-829-1040, and select from 7 topics of general interest.

Income Tax Time - When preparing your tax return, always write your social security number on each page, or attachment, so if misplaced by the IRS, it can be reattached.

172nd Year - *Baer's Agricultural Almanac & Gardener's Guide*, 1997 Edition, presents farm and garden tips, weather forecasts, moon phases, and recipes. The cost is \$3.50 a copy postpaid. Contact: Serena Nova, Baer's, P.O. Box 328, Lancaster, PA 17608; telephone: 717-392-0733.

Also - Just by asking, you can get the quarterly *Baer's Garden Newsletter* free. Now in its 17th year, write to the address listed above and specify *Baer's Garden Newsletter*.

Greenhouse Raspberries - For more information about the production of fruits and vegetables throughout the year using controlled environments, request a copy of *Buried Treasures: Off-Season Production of Strawberries and Raspberries*. Contact: Marvin P. Pritts, Department of Fruit and Vegetable Science, 134-A Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-5908; telephone: 607-255-1798; fax: 607-255-0599.

Case Studies - The new book, *Families on Small Farms*, is 432 pages and costs \$48.50. Contact: Jess Howard, Michigan State University Press, 14055 Harrison Road, Room 25, East Lansing, MI 48828-5202; telephone: 517-355-9543; fax 800-678-2120.

Resource - *Religious Congregations on the Land*, by the National Catholic Rural Life Conference (NCRLC), is 57

pages and costs \$15 each. In this publication the writers have found the beginnings of a new movement of religious groups committed to saving the culture, which in our time involves the land and the local community. Contact: Joan Allsup, NCRLC, 4625 Beaver Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50310-2199; telephone: 515-270-2634; fax: 515-270-9447.

Cheese Lovers - There is a quarterly newsletter filled with information on cheese, cheesemaking, and cheesemakers. *Cheesemaker's Journal* is only \$25 per year (\$35 foreign). Contact: Robert L. Carroll, *Cheesemaker's Journal*, P.O. Box 216, Northampton, MA 01061; telephone: 413-585-5131.

HELP WANTED

Become a vegetable soybean breeder! Free seeds of a mixed population of soybeans are available from the USDA-Agricultural Research Service. Three hundred F3 seeds from crosses involving a large green seed vegetable type soybean with giant silage types can be requested from Dr. Thomas Devine. This will permit the grower to make plant selections based on climate, soil, and personal preferences. **If eaten, fresh seeds should always be boiled for approximately 20 minutes before serving.** The seeds will be available until the supply is exhausted. Make requests by contacting the following: Vegetable Soybean Request, Dr. Thomas Devine, USDA-ARS, Plant Molecular Biology, Room 118, Bldg. 006 BARC-West, 10300 Baltimore Ave., Beltsville, MD 20705-2350.

CLOSING REMARKS

Andy Lee, author of the books *Chicken Tractor and Backyard Market Gardening*, wrote an article entitled *Agriculture - The Future is Small* that appeared in *Acres USA*, November 1995. The article was quite long and was a reflection of his visions of new integrated community gardeners. Ultimately, the author listed several guidelines and design criteria for creating integrated garden farms. He wrote—"These new small farms and large gardens can feed anywhere from one family to hundreds of families, depending on the resources and the needs and goals of the farming family." **Guideline 9** reads—"Resolutely test all farm decisions against the directive of environmentally sensitive, economically sensible, and socially just."

To my surprise and of particular interest to me were his use of words I casually had spoken to him in conversation some years earlier when he visited the USDA Office for Small-Scale Agriculture. "As my good friend Bud Kerr, Director of the USDA Office for Small-Scale Agriculture, puts it, 'It's a question of scents, cents, and sense.' If it smells bad it's probably costing you money and harming the environment. If agriculture succeeds at the expense of any person or group then it is socially indefensible. In either case it probably makes no sense whatsoever to continue." With a tear in one eye and twinkle in the other, goodbye and I thank all those people that I've met and those who I have yet to meet. (Note: Howard W. "Bud" Kerr, Jr. retired on January 3, 1997 after nearly 40 years of Government service.)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 9-11, 1997 - Illinois Specialty Grower's Association (ISGA) Convention and Trade Show, Holiday Inn East, Springfield, IL. Contact: Lowell Lenschow, ISGA, 1701 Towanda Avenue, Bloomington, IL 61702-2901; telephone: 309-557-2107, fax: 309-557-3729.

January 9-12, 1997 - GrowerExpo '97, Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, IL. Contact: Cathy Wooton, Grower Talks, 335 N. River Street, P.O. Box 9, Batavia, IL 60510; telephone: 1-800-456-5380; fax: 1-800-456-0132.

January 16-19, 1997 - 6th Annual Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SAWG), Radisson Hotel, Gainesville, FL. Contact: Jean Mills, SAWG, telephone: 205-333-8504.

January 25, 1997 - Eco-Fair Texas 1997, Palmer Auditorium, Austin, TX. Contact: Laura Engle, Eco-Fair Texas, 2900 W. Anderson Lane, Suite 20-133, Austin, TX 78757; telephone: 512-418-8708.

January 28-February 2, 1997 - The North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association 1997 pre- and post-conference tours will feature stops at unique southwestern markets and a visit to Mexico. Contact: Vance Corum, North

American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association, 317 West 38th Street, Vancouver, WA 98660; telephone: 360-693-5500.

February 18-20, 1997 - 34th Annual New York State (NYS) Direct Marketing Conference, Owego Treadway Inn, Owego, NY. Contact: Andrea Eichhorn, 2859 NY Rt. 26, Glen Aubrey, NY 13777; telephone: 607-862-3985.

February 21, 1997 - North Carolina Specialty Crops School, Ramada Inn, Oxford, NC. Contact: Carl J. Cantaluppi, Extension Horticulturist, Granville County Center, P. O. Box 926, Oxford, NC 27565; telephone: 919-603-1350.

February 23-25, 1997 - The 14th Annual California Farm Conference, Riverside Convention Center and Historic Mission Inn, Riverside, CA. Contact: Jeannette Warnert, UC Regional Office - Fresno, 1177 East Shaw Avenue, Suite 101, Fresno, CA 93710; telephone: 209-225-5611.

July 15-19, 1997 - Master Gardener International Conference and Trade Show, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Sacramento, CA. Contact: Sharon A. McCray, University of California, 90 N. Winchester Blvd., Santa Clara, CA 95050; telephone: 408-241-9973; fax: 408-241-9974.

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